

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-09 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03

H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01 IO-10 AID-05 /092 W

----- 013493

R 150945Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2762

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 6443

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, US, FR

SUBJ: FRENCH QUESTIONING OF U.S. CREDIBILITY AS AN ALLY

1. CHRISTIAN LAMBERT, FRENCH EMBASSY COUNSELOR, CALLED ON THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR APRIL 15. LAMBERT HAD JUST RETURNED FROM A 30-DAY HOLIDAY THROUGH SOUTH ASIA AND EUROPE, AND WAS SURPRISED AT THE RAPIDITY OF THE DECLINE IN THE INDOCHINA SITUATION SINCE HIS DEPARTURE. HE NOTED THAT THAILAND WOULD BE SERIOUSLY RE-EVALUATING ITS FOREIGN POLICY STANCE. HE ASKED PARTICULARLY WHETHER WE INTENDED TO WITHDRAW OUR TROOPS WITHIN THE ONE-YEAR DEADLINE THAT THE KHUKRIT GOVERNMENT HAS PRESCRIBED. WE

REPLIED THAT, AS SEVERAL U.S. OFFICIALS HAD PREVIOUSLY STATED. WE WERE HERE AT THE INVITATION OF THE THAI GOVERNMENT. IF THE THAI GOVERNMENT ASKS US TO LEAVE, WE MUST LEAVE. LAMBERT SAW LITTLE REASON TO RETAIN OUR FORCES HERE IF WE WERE NOT GOING TO USE THEM TO HALT NORTH VIETNAMESE AGGRESSION.

2. LAMBERT SAID OUR MILITARY DEPARTURE WOULD SIGNAL U.S. ABANDONMENT OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. WE COUNTERED THAT WE WOULD MOST LIKELY CONTINUE TO PLAY A ROLE IN THE REGION, AND
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HINTED THAT THERE MAY BE A POSSIBILITY OF NEGOTIATING

MILITARY REENTRY RIGHTS WITH THE THAI. LAMBERT THOUGHT THAT WHATEVER THE CASE, THAILAND'S PROSPECTS WERE DIM. HE FELT THE COMBINATION OF DIVISION AND CORRUPTION IN INTERNAL POLITICS, PLUS EXTERNALLY SUPPORTED SUBVERSION, WOULD BRING THAILAND WITHIN FIVE YEARS TO THE STATE WHERE CAMBODIA IS TODAY. HE THOUGHT THAT HANOI WOULD STEP UP ITS SUPPORT TO THE THAI INSURGENCY EVEN WHILE CONSOLIDATING ITS HOLD OVER INDOCHINA.

3. THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM IN LAMBERT'S VIEW, HOWEVER, WAS THE U.S. RELIABILITY AS AN ALLY. HE SENSED A QUESTIONING ABOUT U.S. CREDIBILITY IN THE COUNTRIES THAT HE HAD JUST VISITED, PARTICULARLY IRAN AND FRANCE. HE CITED THE LATEST HARRIS PUBLIC OPINION POLL WHICH INDICATED THAT AMERICANS WOULD REACT STRONGLY ONLY TO AN INVASION OF CANADA. HE SAID THAT WHAT HE DESCRIBED AS GROWING AMERICAN ISOLATIONISM WAS MAKING WESTERN EUROPE UNEASY BECAUSE SUCH A TREND COULD ENCOURAGE THE SOVIET UNION TO MAKE FURTHER TEST OF THE AMERICAN WILL.

4. COMMENT: WE DO NOT KNOW TO WHAT EXTENT LAMBERT WAS REFLECTING VIEWS OF THE QUAI ON AMERICAN CREDIBILITY THAT HE MAY HAVE PICKED UP DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO PARIS.
MASTERS

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